THE HEROIC LEGEND OF ARSLAN

KC
KODANSHA COMICS

CHAPTER 53

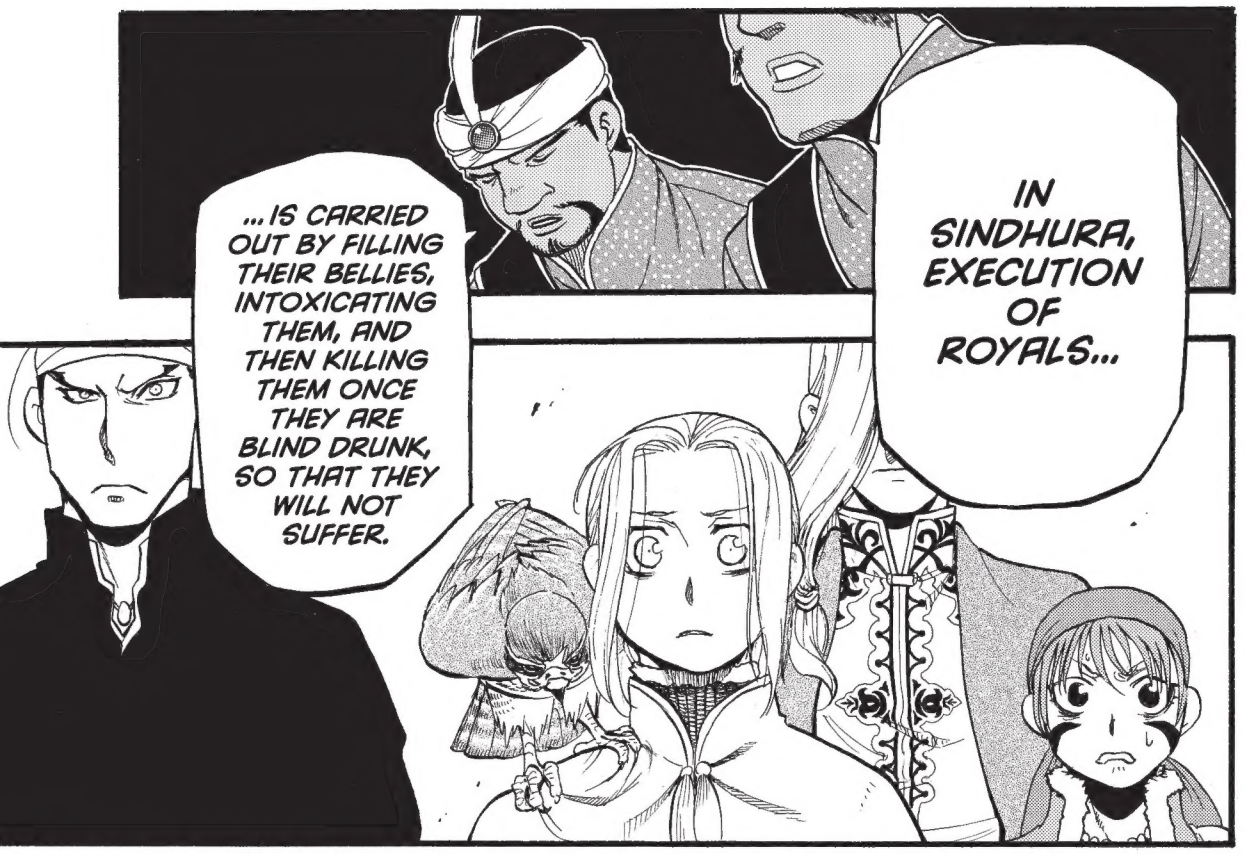
YOSHIKI TANAKA
HIROMU ARAKAWA

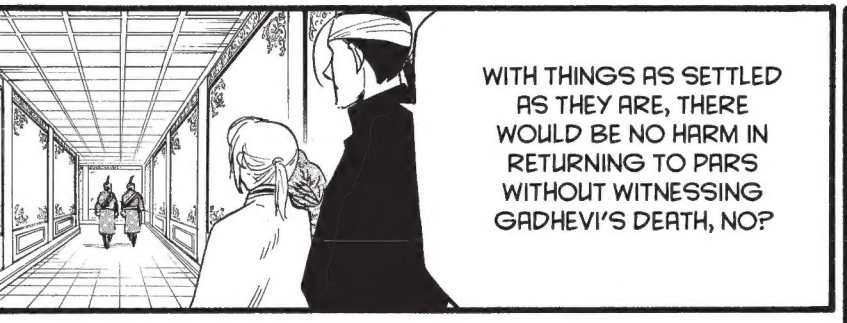
...?
OH ?
ARE YOU AWAKE?
SA-LIMA...
フラ SWAY
WHAT IS...?
フラ SWAY

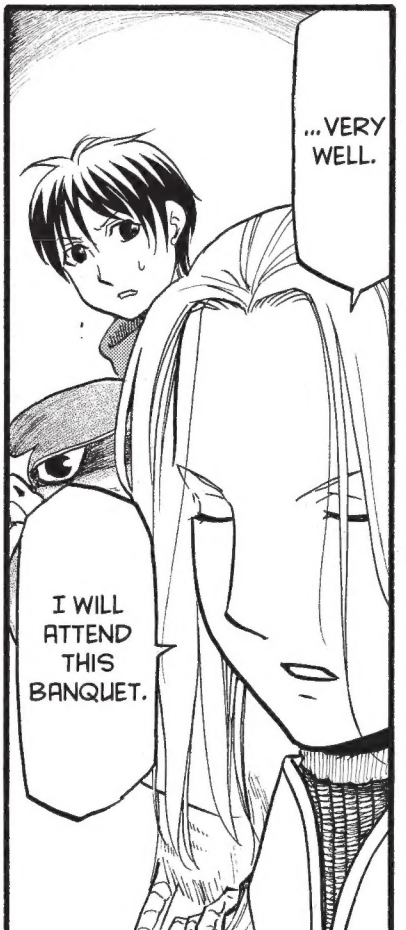
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS ?!
YOU HAVE BEEN BOTH GIVEN UP ON BY THE GODS IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE, AND CAST OUT BY THE HUMANS BELOW.
IT IS AS IT APPEARS.
IT WAS I.
...! UNTIE THESE ROPES !!
WHO HAS FORCED ME TO ENDURE THIS HUMILIATION?!

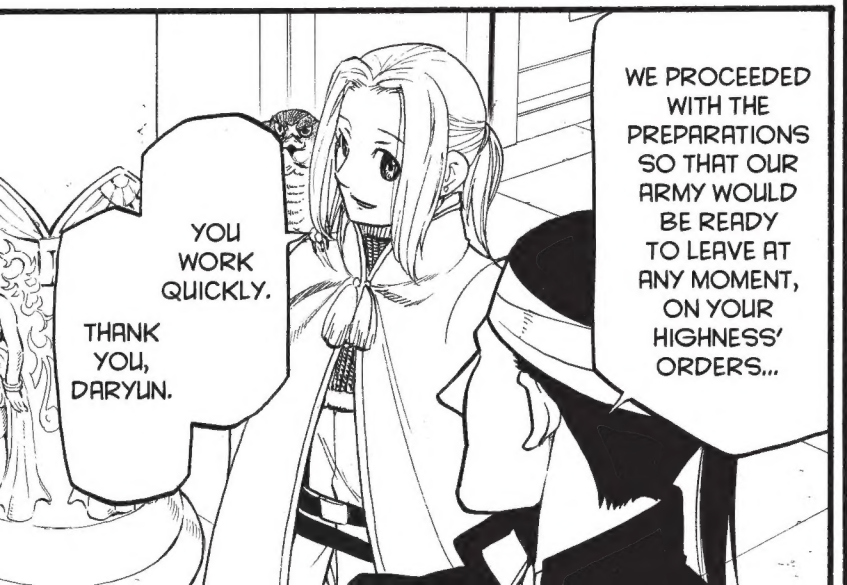
DAMN YOU, WHORE !!
YOU BETRAYED YOUR HUSBAND ?!
I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF SLIPPING A SLEEPING DRUG INTO YOUR MEAL.
I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T BRING YOURSELF TO JUSTICE OBEDIENTLY.
I AVENGED MY FATHER.
I DID NOT BETRAY MY HUSBAND.
SIT TIGHT FOR A LITTLE WHILE, GADHEVI.

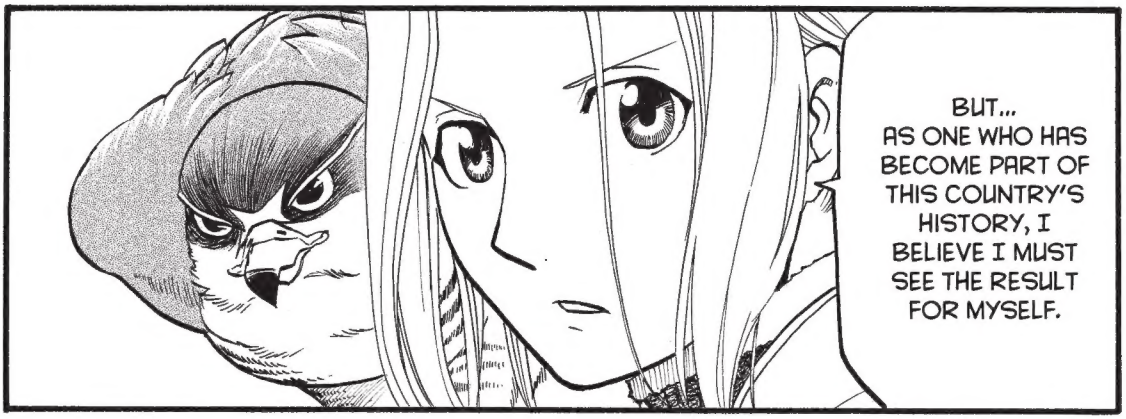
I'M GOING TO PREPARE THE BANQUET.
A BAN-QUET ...?
YES, SIR...
...BECAUSE WE'VE CAPTURED GADHEVI.
HUH! SO THOSE BROTHERS INTEND TO RECONCILE!
NO.
HIS MAJESTY KING RAJENDRA HAS SET IT UP, TO DRINK WITH GADHEVI.
HE INSISTS THAT PRINCE ARSLAN JOIN THEM AS WELL.

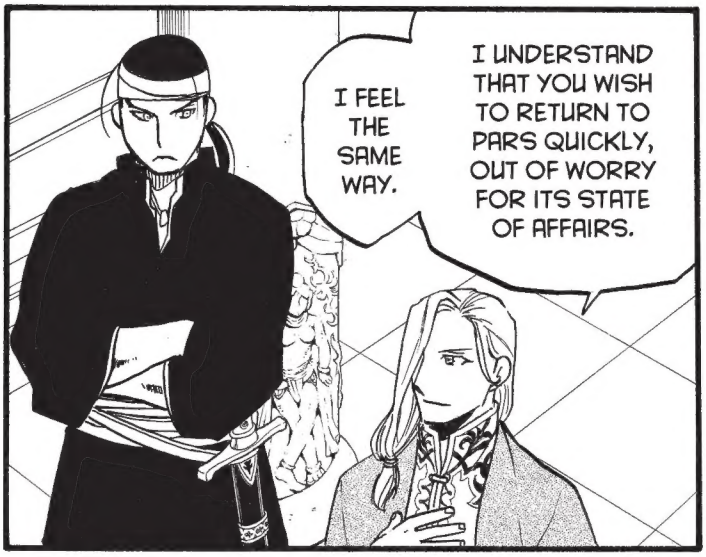

IN SINDHURA, EXECUTION OF ROYALS...
...IS CARRIED OUT BY FILLING THEIR BELLIES, INTOXICATING THEM, AND THEN KILLING THEM ONCE THEY ARE BLIND DRUNK, SO THAT THEY WILL NOT SUFFER.

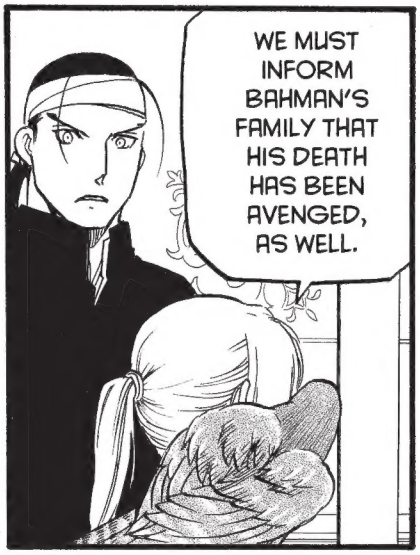

WITH THINGS AS SETTLED AS THEY ARE, THERE WOULD BE NO HARM IN RETURNING TO PARS WITHOUT WITNESSING GADHEVI'S DEATH, NO?

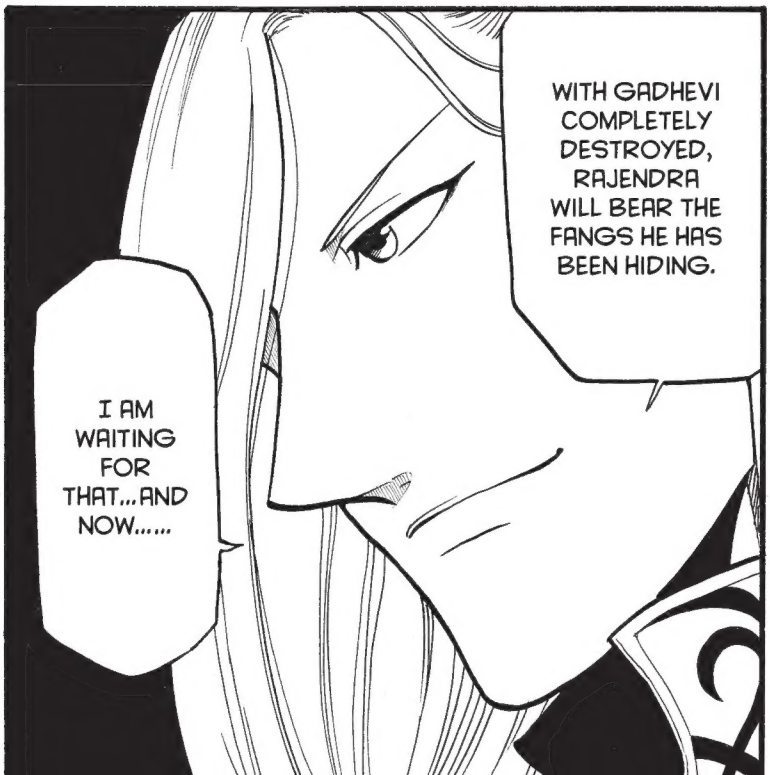

...VERY WELL.
I WILL ATTEND THIS BANQUET.

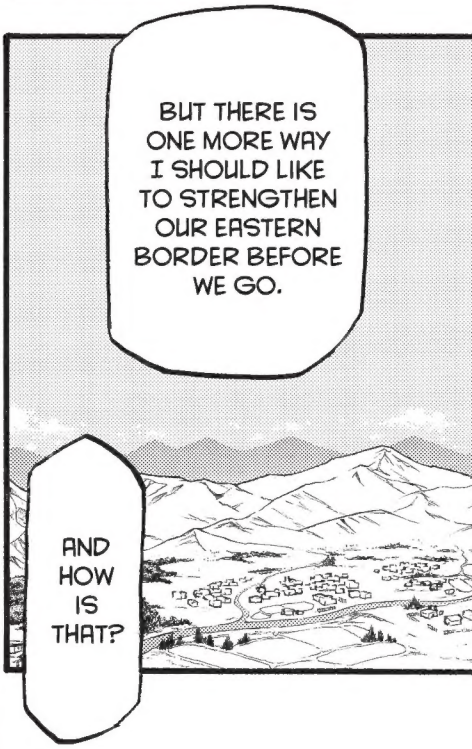

WE PROCEEDED WITH THE PREPARATIONS SO THAT OUR ARMY WOULD BE READY TO LEAVE AT ANY MOMENT, ON YOUR HIGHNESS' ORDERS...
YOU WORK QUICKLY.
THANK YOU, DARYUN.


BUT...
AS ONE WHO HAS BECOME PART OF THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY, I BELIEVE I MUST SEE THE RESULT FOR MYSELF.

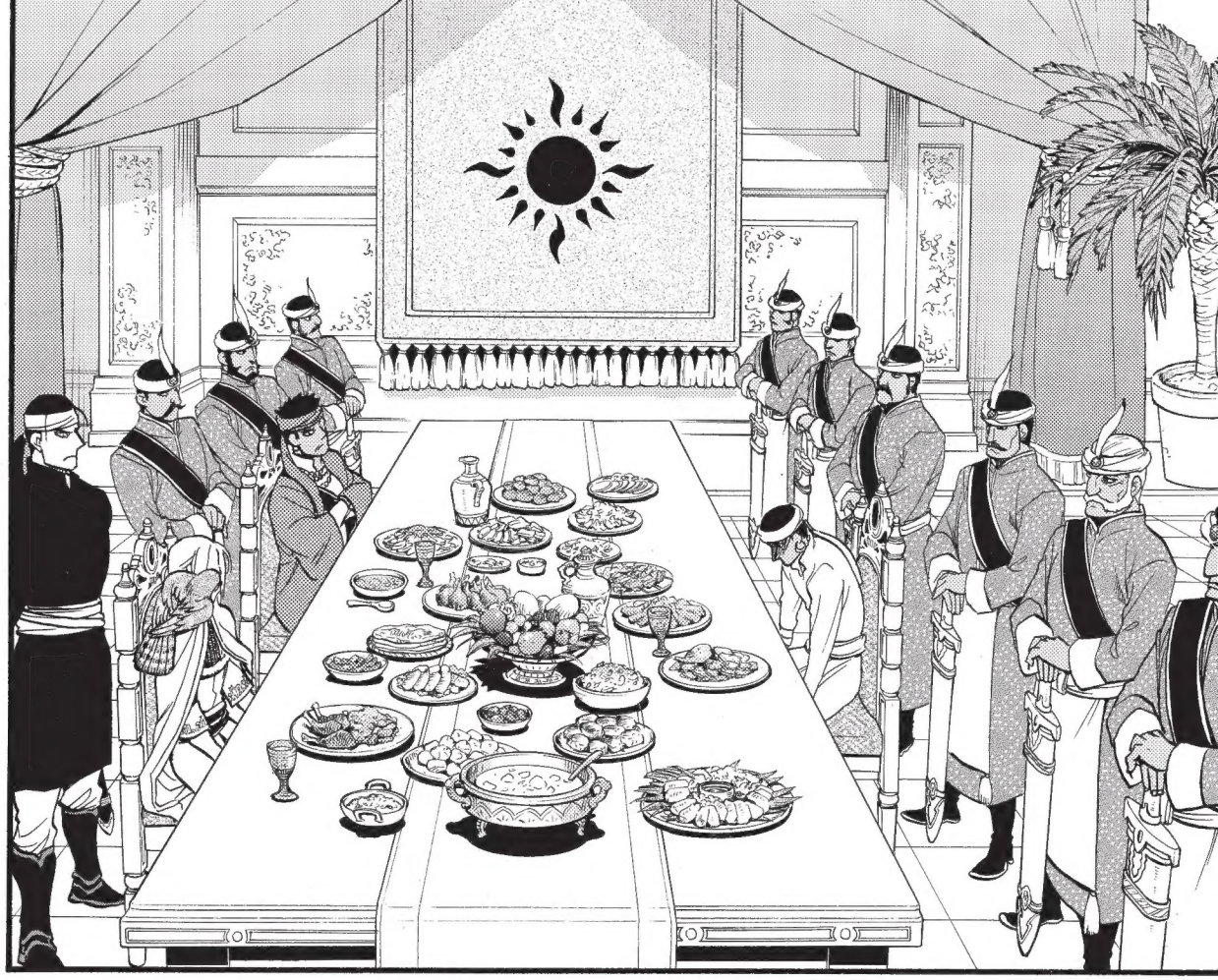

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WISH TO RETURN TO PARS QUICKLY, OUT OF WORRY FOR ITS STATE OF AFFAIRS.
I FEEL THE SAME WAY.


WE MUST INFORM BAHMAN'S FAMILY THAT HIS DEATH HAS BEEN AVENGED, AS WELL.


WITH GADHEVI COMPLETELY DESTROYED, RAJENDRA WILL BEAR THE FANGS HE HAS BEEN HIDING.
I AM WAITING FOR THAT... AND NOW.....

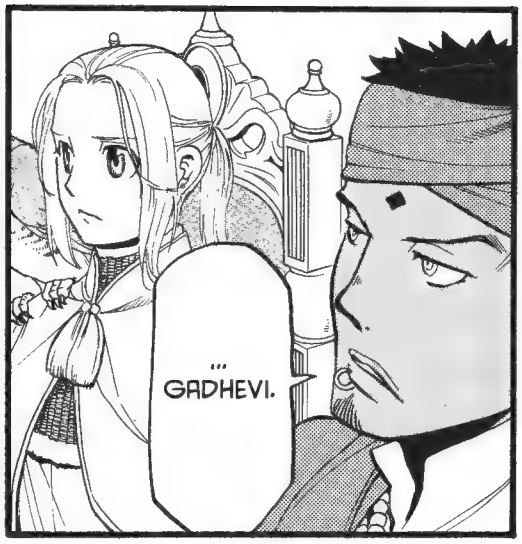

BUT THERE IS ONE MORE WAY I SHOULD LIKE TO STRENGTHEN OUR EASTERN BORDER BEFORE WE GO.
AND HOW IS THAT?

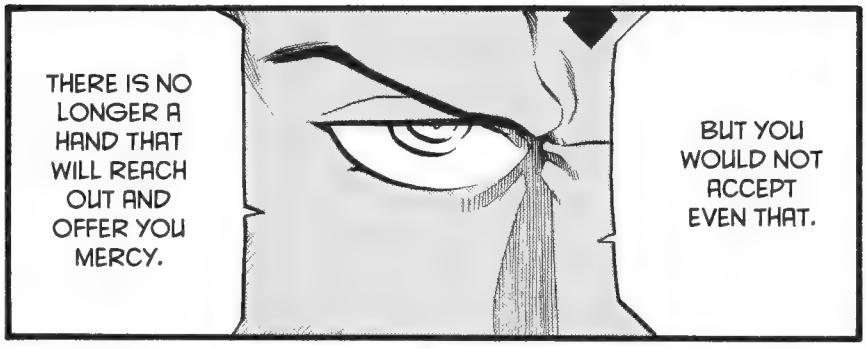
Chapter 53: The Last Supper



WE ARE BROTHERS BY BLOOD, ARE WE NOT?
R...
RAJEN-DRA.....
SO YOU'VE ACCEPT-ED IT?
OH?
I WILL SWEAR MY LOYALTY TO YOU, AND DESTROY YOUR ENEMIES!
I CAN BE YOUR SUBORDI-NATE!
YOU ARE THE VICTOR!
BY A TRICK OF FATE, WE ENDED UP FIGHTING OVER THE THRONE, BUT THAT HAS BEEN SETTLED!
SO YOU WILL LET ME LIVE, WON'T YOU?
YES?!

WE TWO BROTHERS STAKED OUR LIVES AND OUR COUNTRY ON THIS FIGHT.
WE BOTH KNEW FULL WELL WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE LOST.


...
GADHEVI.

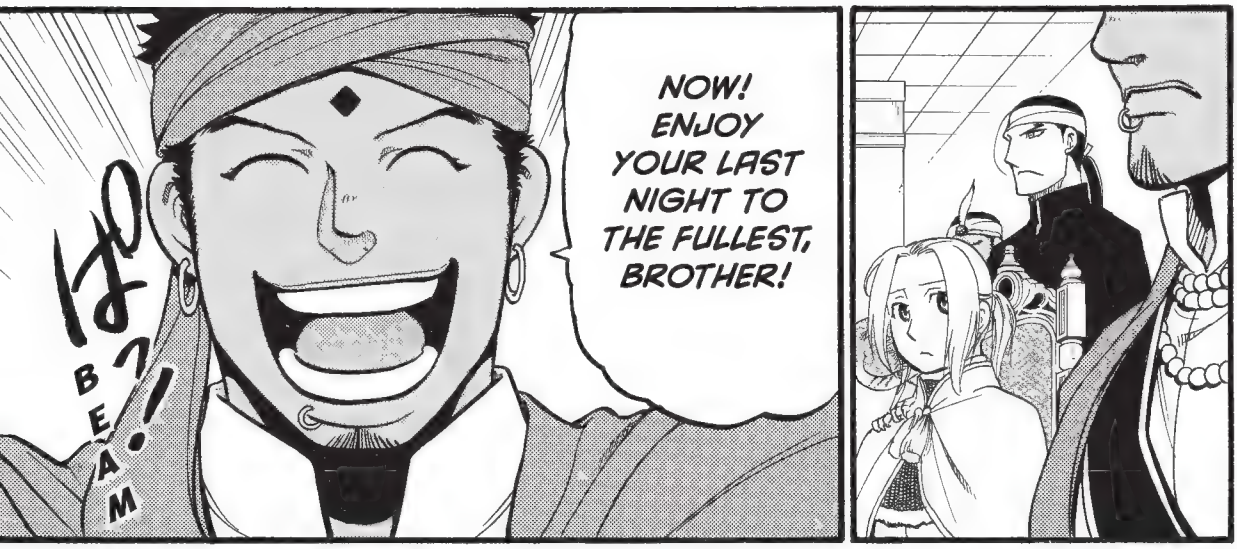

THERE IS NO LONGER A HAND THAT WILL REACH OUT AND OFFER YOU MERCY.
BUT YOU WOULD NOT ACCEPT EVEN THAT.

YOUR ACTIONS AFTER THE *ADIKALANIA* WERE WORTHY OF DEATH.
YET FATHER MAGNANI-MOUSLY GRANTED YOU CLEM-ENCY.

DIE WITH GOOD GRACE.
I WILL LET YOU DIE A PAINLESS DEATH. DO NOT GROVEL FOR YOUR LIFE PATHETICALLY.

IT IS UNFORTUNATE WE WERE BROTHERS.

IF WE HAD BEEN STRANGERS, PERHAPS WE COULD HAVE GOTTEN ALONG A LITTLE BETTER.


NOW! ENJOY YOUR LAST NIGHT TO THE FULLEST, BROTHER!
はっ?!
BEAM!

I'VE PREPARED THE BEST WINE!!
GO ON!! EAT AND DRINK!!

EEK!
BAM
EEEE-EK!
PARSIAN BRAT! THIS HAPPENED BECAUSE YOU INTERFERED !!
SHATTER
FEEL MY VEN-GEAN-CE !!
WHIP

THNK
PWEE!
SWOOP
ARGH!

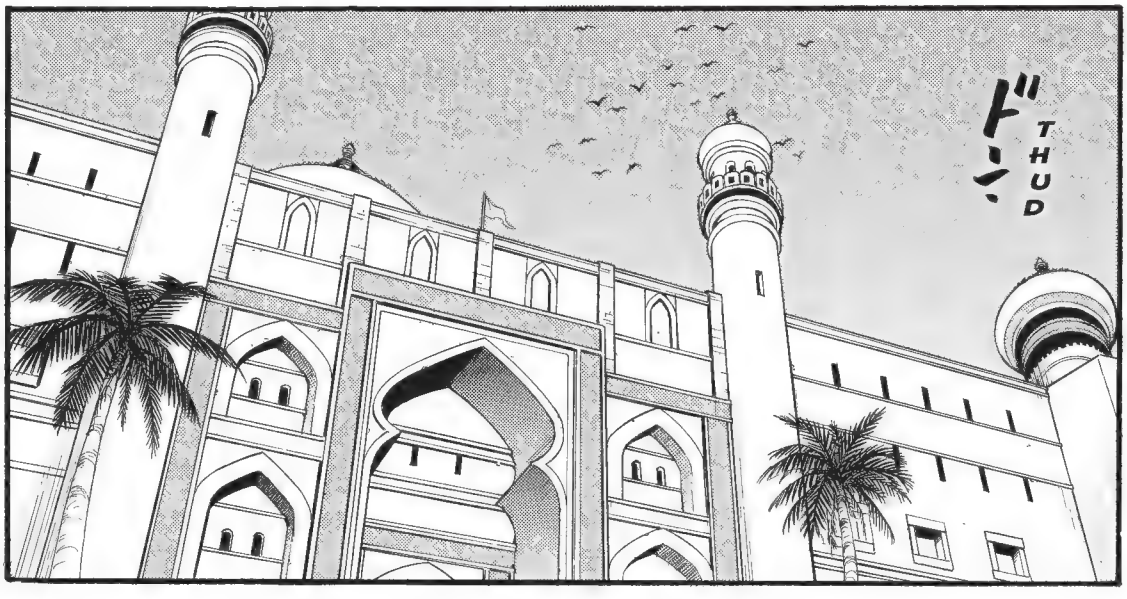
I NEVER THOUGHT YOU WERE THIS MUCH OF A COWARD...
AHH-HHH-HHH!!!

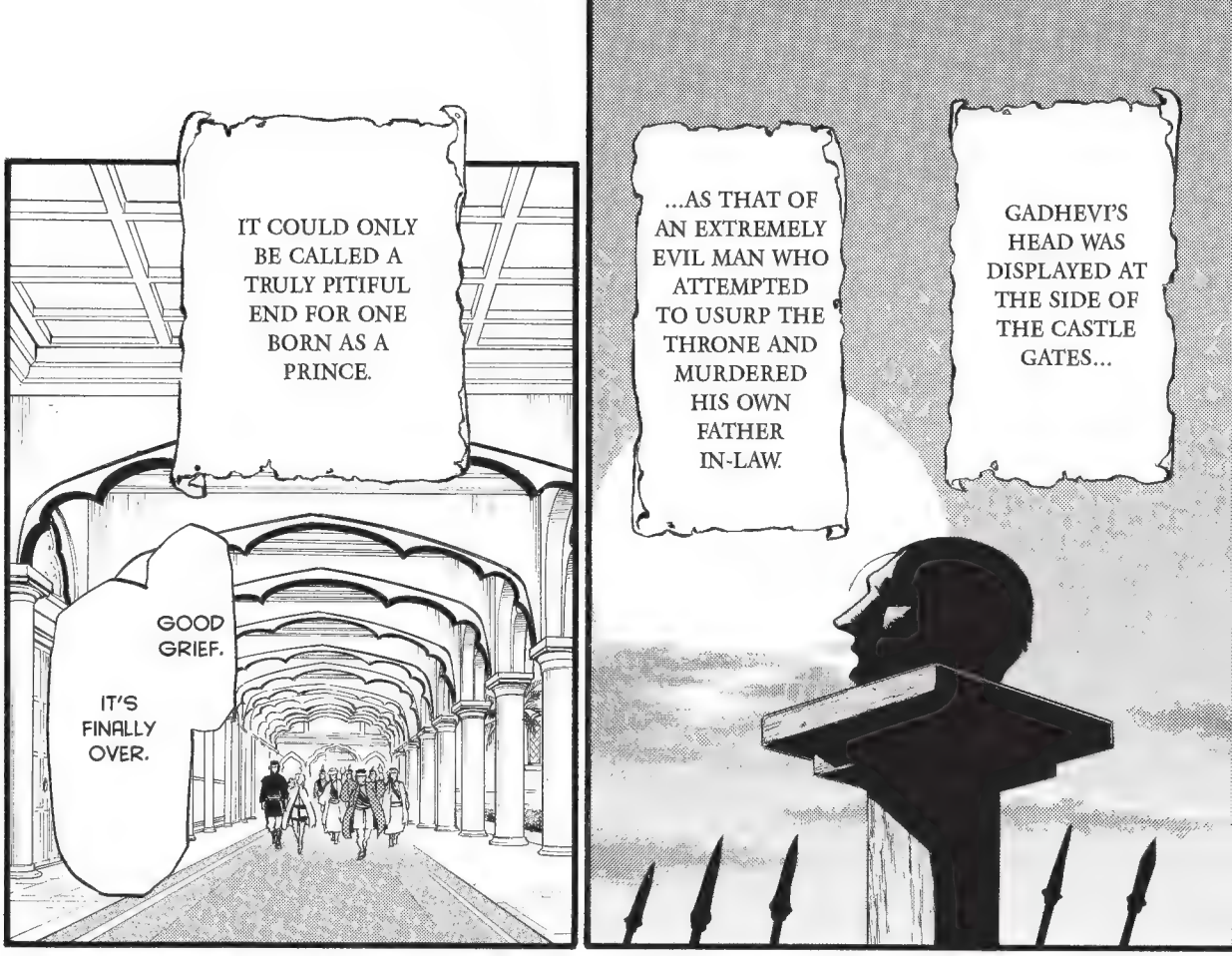
GADHEV!!
GO TO THE WORLD OF THE DEAD, AND HAVE FATHER CORRECT YOUR TWISTED NATURE!

ST... STOP!!
DON'T! PLEASE! NO! DON'T! STOP! DON'T!

L...LET ME GO, INSOLENT FOOLS!!
WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?!

NOOOOOOOO
THNK
?!

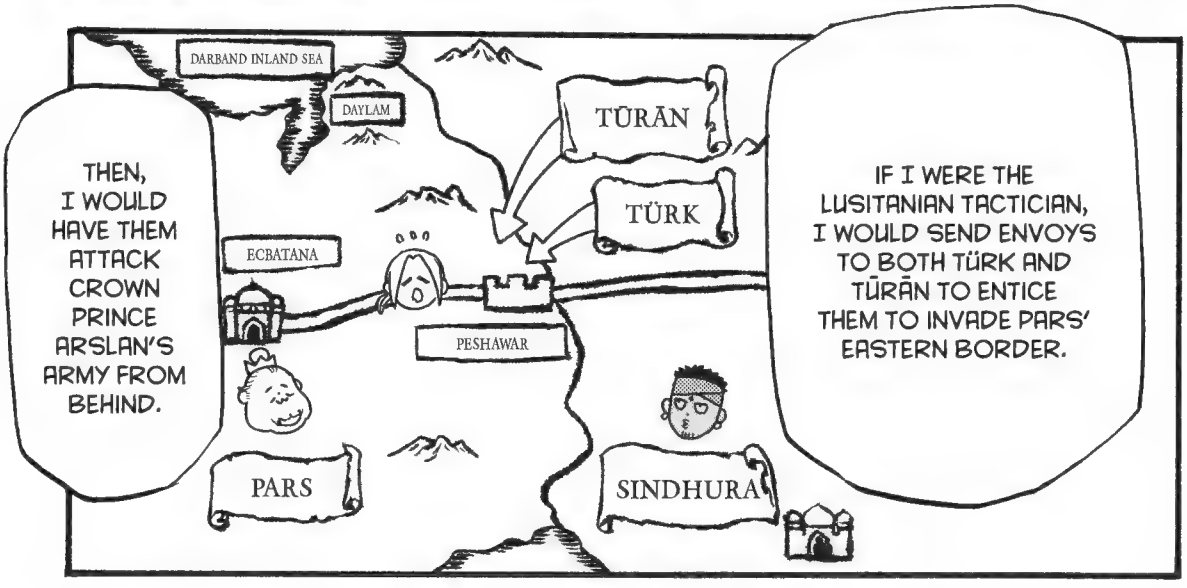

THUD

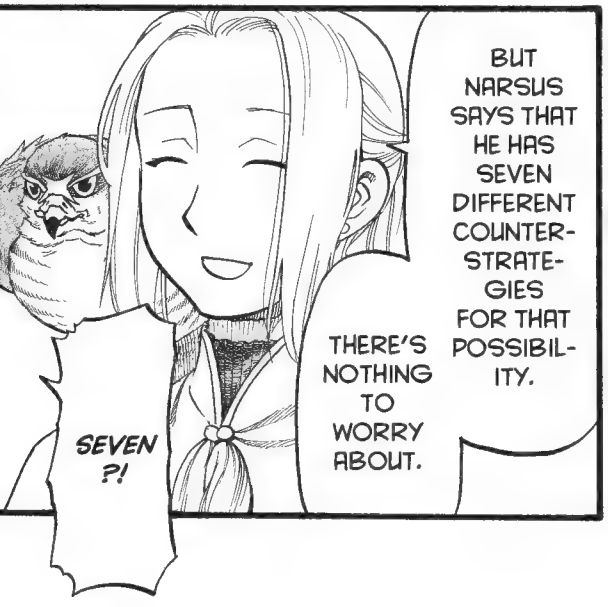

GADHEVI'S HEAD WAS DISPLAYED AT THE SIDE OF THE CASTLE GATES...
...AS THAT OF AN EXTREMELY EVIL MAN WHO ATTEMPTED TO USURP THE THRONE AND MURDERED HIS OWN FATHER IN-LAW.
IT COULD ONLY BE CALLED A TRULY PITIFUL END FOR ONE BORN AS A PRINCE.
GOOD GRIEF.
IT'S FINALLY OVER.

BUT IT'S LEFT A BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH AFTER THE WICKED THING HE DID.
...INDEED.

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW, PRINCE ARSLAN?
I WILL RETURN TO PARS AND FIGHT LUSITANIA, OF COURSE.
DO YOU HAVE ANY HOPE OF DRIVING OFF THOSE INVADERS?
NARSUS WOULD KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT BETTER THAN I.

IN MY OPINION, IF YOU'RE GOING TO FIGHT LUSITANIA, I'D BE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR REAR.
AH... NO, NO! THAT WON'T BE NECES-SARY!
SHALL I CALL HIM AND HAVE HIM EXPLAIN?
I DON'T LIKE HIM...


DARBAND INLAND SEA
DAYLAM
TŪRĀN
TÜRK
ECBATANA
PESHAWAR
PARS
SINDHURA
THEN, I WOULD HAVE THEM ATTACK CROWN PRINCE ARSLAN'S ARMY FROM BEHIND.
IF I WERE THE LUSITANIAN TACTICIAN, I WOULD SEND ENVOYS TO BOTH TÜRK AND TŪRĀN TO ENTICE THEM TO INVADE PARS' EASTERN BORDER.

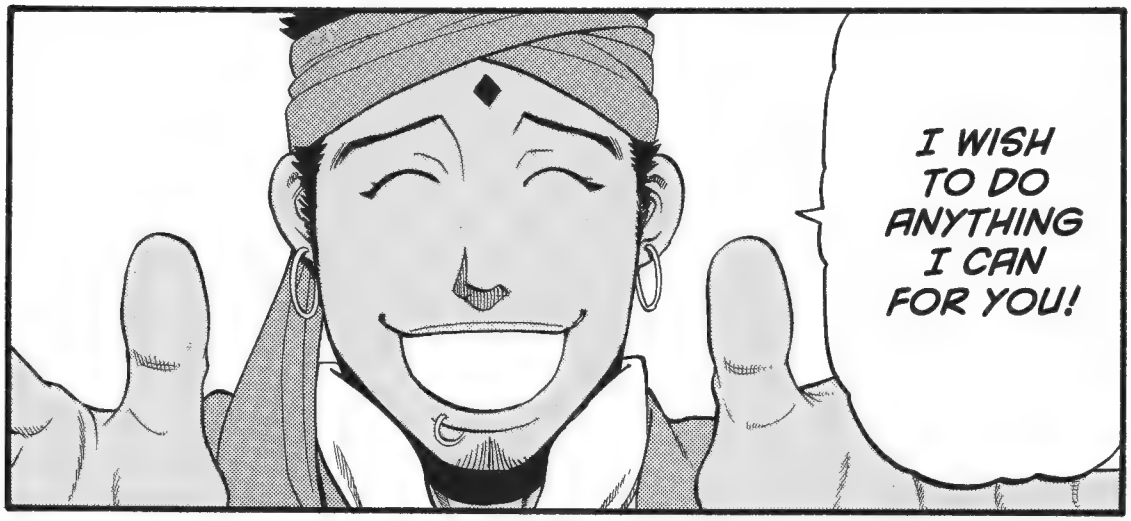

BUT NARSUS SAYS THAT HE HAS SEVEN DIFFERENT COUNTER-STRATE-GIES FOR THAT POSSIBIL-ITY.
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
SEVEN ?!

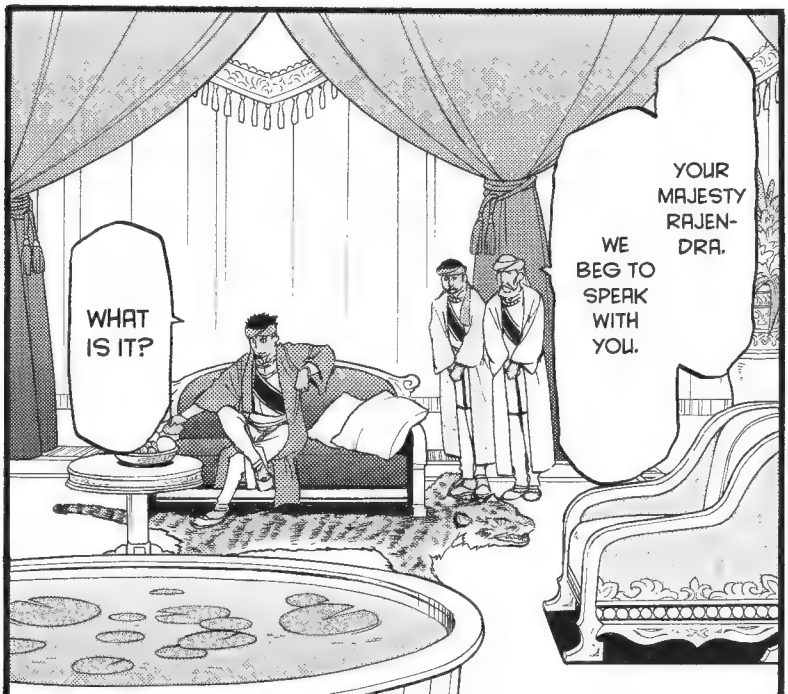
NARSUS WAS SAYING THE SAME THING.
OHO!
THEN PERHAPS I CAN ALSO AID YOU AS A TACTICIAN!

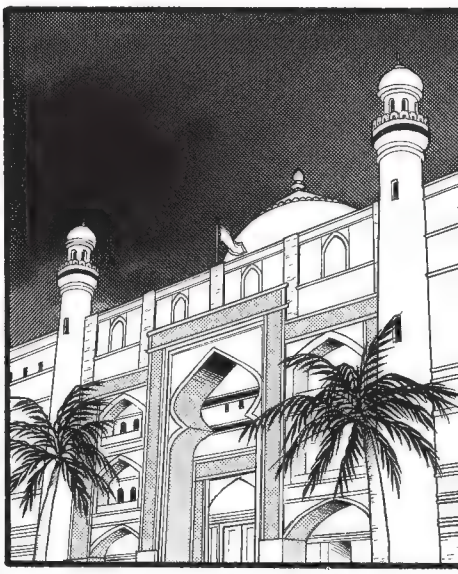
THIS IS SIND-HURA!
WE ARE OUT OF THE PARSIAN GODS' SIGHTS HERE. TELL ME!
I SWEAR BY THE GODS THAT HE HAS TOLD ME NOTHING AT ALL.
IS WHAT YOU SAY, BUT WHAT'S THE TRUTH?
IT IS TRULY TRULY TRUE.
TRULY TRULY?
NO, I TRULY KNOW NOTH-ING.
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! YOU HAD HIM TELL YOU, SURELY?
HE SAID IT IS THE GRAVEST OF SECRETS, AND WOULD NOT TELL EVEN ME.
WHAT ARE THEY?
SOUNDS LIKE HE HONESTLY DOESN'T KNOW ANY-THING...
I'VE NOTHING MORE TO GAIN FROM THEM, SO PERHAPS I'LL KICK THEM OUT STRAIGHTAWAY...
I SWEAR IT BY THE GODS OF SIND-HURA!
HMMM... REALLY ...?
I STILL HAVEN'T THANKED YOU FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE FOR ME, PRINCE ARSLAN.
OTHER THAN LAND, I WILL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WISH. RICHES, PROVISIONS, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN—JUST SAY THE WORD.
ANY-THING ...?

WILL YOU LEND ME 500 OF YOUR BEST CAVALRYMEN?
THEN I WILL TAKE YOU UP ON YOUR KIND OFFER.
THAT'S IT?
500 CAV-ALRY-MEN?
I WILL LEND YOU 3,000 CAVAL-RYMEN !!
WE MAY NOT BE BROTHERS BY BLOOD, BUT WE ARE ALLIED FRIENDS WHO WILL LIVE AND DIE TOGETHER!
DO NOT BE SO RE-SERVED !

I AM GRATEFUL, KING RAJENDRA, BUT WON'T YOU NEED TO COMPLETELY UNITE YOUR COUNTRY IN THE COMING DAYS?
YOU MUST BE SORRY TO LEND OUT EVEN ONE SOLDIER...
SORRY? NOT AT ALL, PRINCE ARSLAN!!


I WISH TO DO ANYTHING I CAN FOR YOU!


YOUR MAJESTY RAJENDRA.
WE BEG TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
WHAT IS IT?



WORDS OF REMON-STRA-TION?
...
NO MATTER.
SPEAK YOUR MIND.
IT IS TRUE THAT WE OWE A DEBT TO PRINCE ARSLAN FOR HIS HELP.
HOW-EVER ...
HOW-EVER ...
...3,000 CAVAL-RYMEN IS TOO MUCH— YES?
IF YOU KNEW THIS, THEN WHY...!!
COME NOW. CAN YOU FELLOWS NOT SEE MY TRUE INTENTIONS?
I'VE HIDDEN A POWDER KEG WITHIN THE PARSIAN ARMY.

IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT, 3,000 OF OUR BEST CAVALRYMEN WILL SUDDENLY SET FIRE TO THE PARSIAN CAMP FROM WITHIN AND GO ON THE RAMPAGE.
AT THE SAME TIME, FROM WITHOUT, I WILL PERSONALLY LEAD SOLDIERS TO ATTACK THEM.
HUH...? THEN YOU MEAN...
YES.
YOU FINALLY CAUGHT UP?
NO MATTER HOW STRONG THE PARSIAN ARMY IS, WE CAN BEAT THEM WITH THIS STRATEGY.
...THEN DO YOU MEAN TO KILL PRINCE ARSLAN...?
DON'T BE A FOOL!
I AM NOT THAT HEART-LESS!
I...ISN'T THAT TOO CRUEL?!
FOR THEIR OWN SAKE, NOT FOR MINE.
THOSE MEN LENT YOUR MAJESTY THEIR AID!

PART OF WHY I AM PLAYING SUCH A SEVERE TRICK ON HIM IS BECAUSE I WANT TO HAVE ARSLAN GROW INTO A MATURE KING!
WE WILL TAKE ARSLAN HOSTAGE, WRENCH AWAY A TIIINY BIT OF PARSIAN LAND, AND THEN SEND HIM BACK ALIVE.
TO START WITH, I LIKE THAT NAÏVE BOY!
SPEAKING OF GIFTS, THERE IS ONE MORE PERSON I MUST THANK...
...OH!
...IS THAT SO?
HA! HA HA HA HA HA HA
YES! THIS IS A GIFT OF LIFE EXPERIENCE, FROM ME TO HIM!
I AM NOT WORTHY.
NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU SOME-HOW...
THANKS TO YOU, LADY SALIMA, EVERY-THING WENT SWIFTLY.

NORMALLY, I WOULD BE KILLED. YOU HAVE ALREADY SPARED MY LIFE. I DO NOT WISH FOR ANYTHING MORE.
I AM THE WIFE OF GADHEVI, WHO DEFIED YOUR MAJESTY...
...OR TO BE THE RAJAH'S CONCU-BINE?
NO NEED TO HOLD BACK.
THERE MUST BE SOME-THING.
A MANOR, OR RICHES...

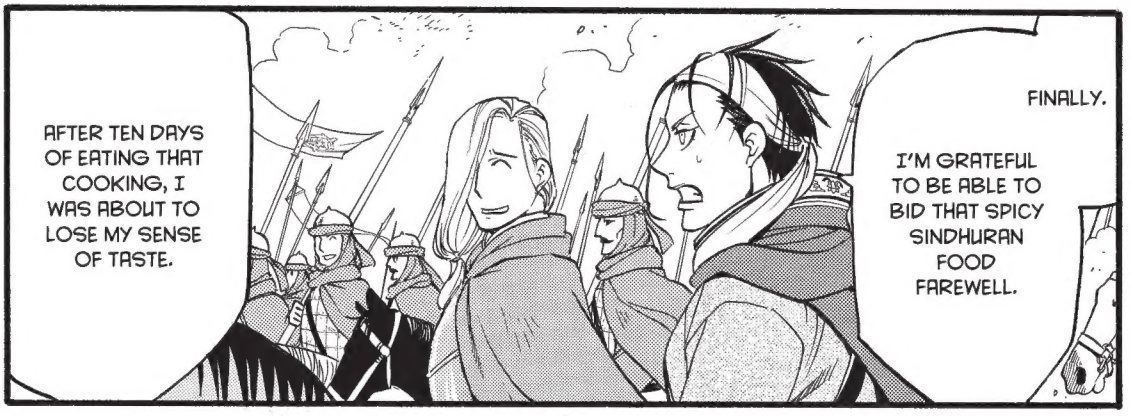
...LIKE STRONG MEN.
.....I...
BUT...
BUT... I DISLIKE YOU.

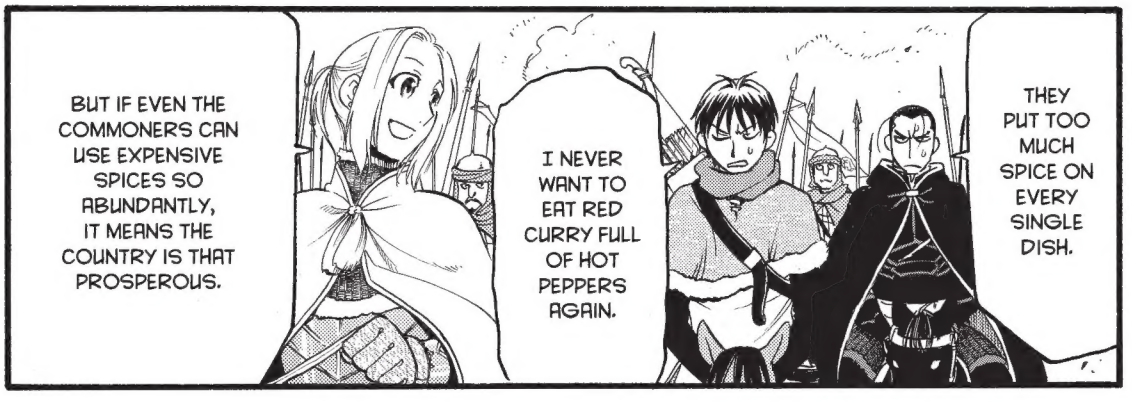
I'VE BEEN SPLEN-DIDLY TURNED DOWN!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
SNORT
ぶっ

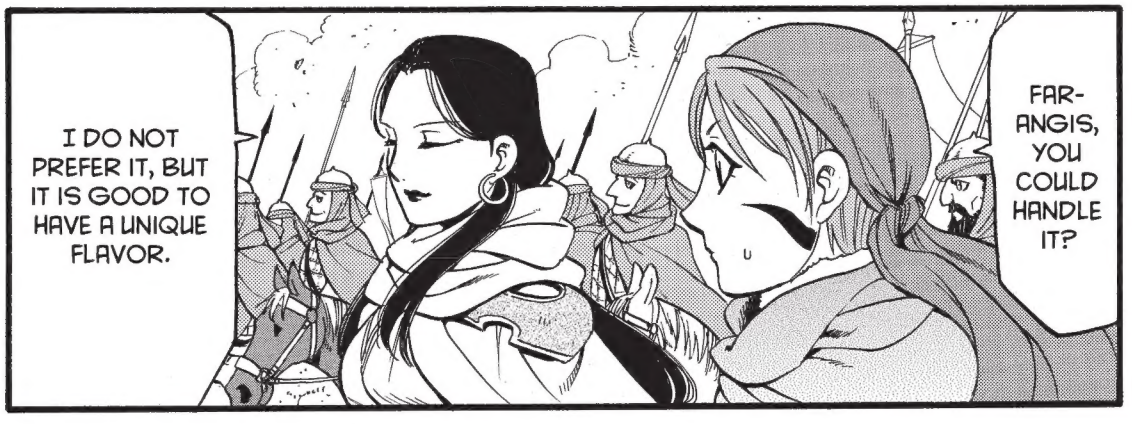
THE MANOR AND ALL!
YOU MAY INHERIT MAHEN-DRA'S ESTATE AS IT IS!
ONCE AGAIN, I PROMISE THAT YOU WILL NOT BE PUNISHED IN ANY WAY.
LADY SA-LIMA.
SMACK
ばん

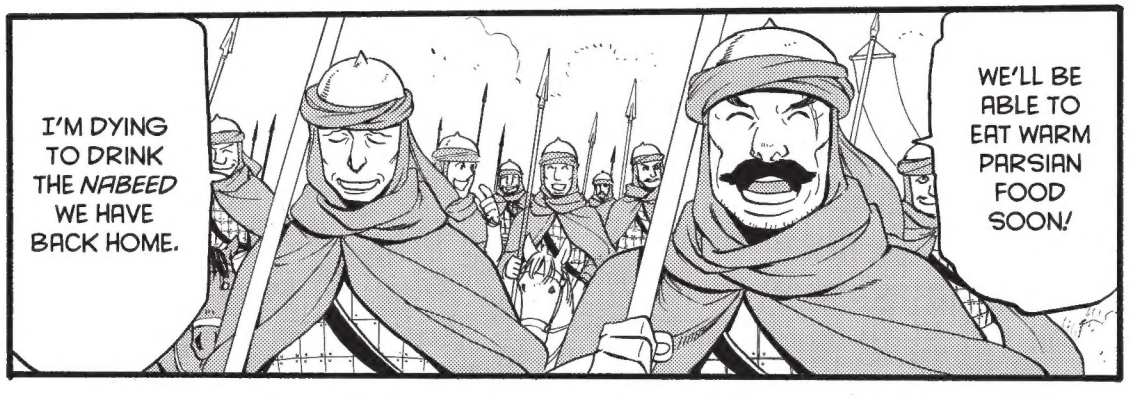
LIVE AS YOU PLEASE.

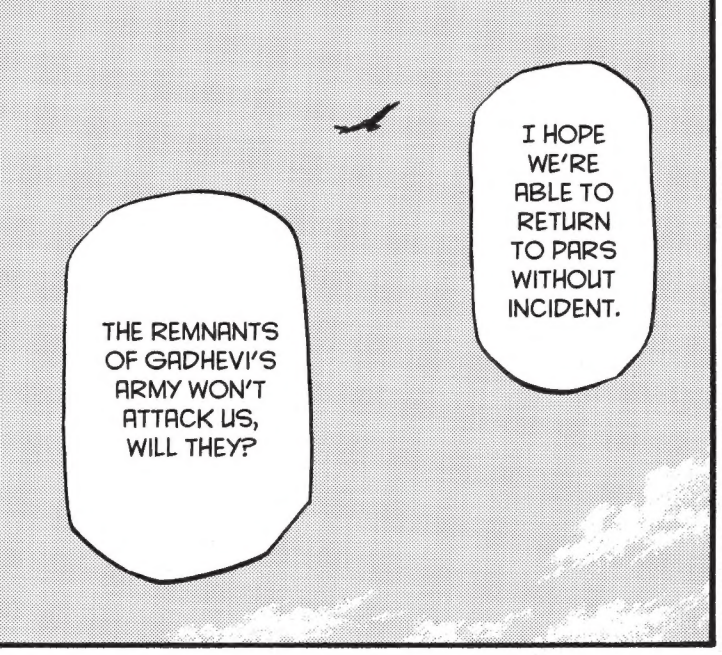
MAY THE FAVOR OF THE GODS BE UPON YOUR MAJESTY EVEN MORE...
I AM VERY GRATEFUL.
IF HE'D GONE WITH "QUEEN," I THINK HIS MAJESTY WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO LOOK LADY SALIMA IN THE EYE AGAIN...
NO, NO, IF I DID THAT... HRRRM...
HMMM. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TOLD HER I WOULD MAKE HER MY QUEEN, NOT MY CONCUBINE...
SLAM!!!


AFTER TEN DAYS OF EATING THAT COOKING, I WAS ABOUT TO LOSE MY SENSE OF TASTE.
FINALLY.
I'M GRATEFUL TO BE ABLE TO BID THAT SPICY SINDHURAN FOOD FAREWELL.


BUT IF EVEN THE COMMONERS CAN USE EXPENSIVE SPICES SO ABUNDANTLY, IT MEANS THE COUNTRY IS THAT PROSPEROUS.
I NEVER WANT TO EAT RED CURRY FULL OF HOT PEPPERS AGAIN.
THEY PUT TOO MUCH SPICE ON EVERY SINGLE DISH.


I DO NOT PREFER IT, BUT IT IS GOOD TO HAVE A UNIQUE FLAVOR.
FAR-ANGIS, YOU COULD HANDLE IT?

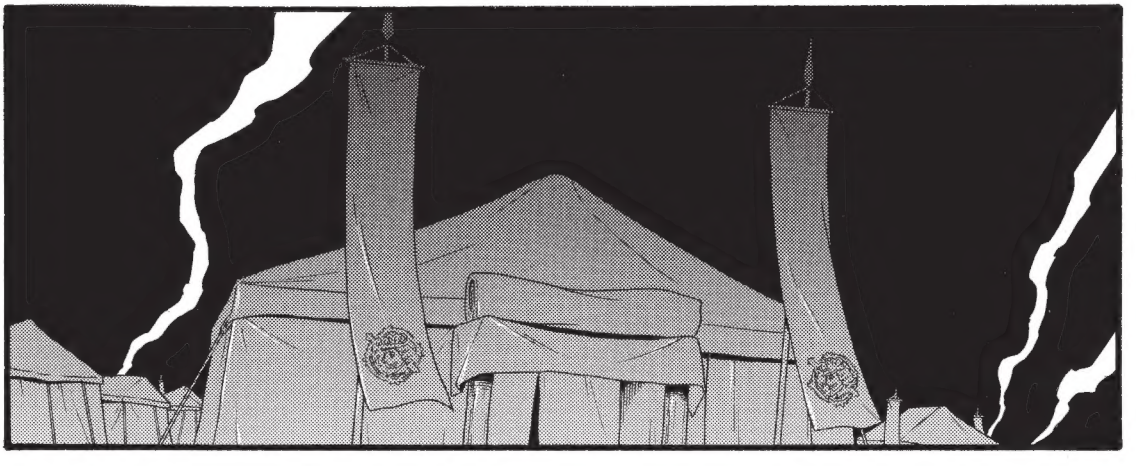

I'M DYING TO DRINK THE *NABEED* WE HAVE BACK HOME.
WE'LL BE ABLE TO EAT WARM PARSIAN FOOD SOON!


I HOPE WE'RE ABLE TO RETURN TO PARS WITHOUT INCIDENT.
THE REMNANTS OF GADHEVI'S ARMY WON'T ATTACK US, WILL THEY?

THE CEREMONY OF THE NEW YEAR WAS RIGHT AFTER WE LEFT PESHAWAR, SO...
WE WERE IN A FOREIGN LAND FOR THREE WHOLE MONTHS.

SKRR
SKRR
SKRR
SKRR

SKRR
SKRR
YOU WORRY TOO MUCH! WE HAVE 3,000 OF GADHEVI'S CAVALRYMEN WITH US.
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, WE CAN LET THEM HANDLE IT.



WHEN WE GET BACK TO PESHAWAR, THEY'LL PROBABLY GRANT HONORS FOR OUR SERVICE.
CAN'T WAIT.
WHAT WILL WE GET, I WONDER ?
APPARENTLY THE GHOLAMS WILL BE FREED TOO.
TRULY ?
HIS HIGHNESS ARSLAN PROMISED IT BEFORE THIS CAMPAIGN.
HE SAID THAT WHEN THE CAMPAIGN ENDED, HE WOULD MAKE THE GHOLAMS IN PESHAWAR ĀZĀT.
ĀZĀT..... WHAT WILL THEY DO FOR WORK?
SEEMS THEY'RE GOING TO SETTLE THE WEST BANK OF THE KAVERI RIVER.
THINK
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT. THEN WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF THE CHORES IN THE FORTRE...

ROAR
FLAMES HAVE SHOT UP IN THE PARSIAN CAMP!
GOOD.
CHARGE!!
To be continued...